

the insurgents to “accept” the Afghan Constitution to one that they “respect” it.

“Any outcome of the peace process must respect the Afghan Constitution and must not jeopardize the rights and freedoms that the citizens of Afghanistan, both men and women, enjoy under the Constitution,” the plan says.

The plan comprises five steps. The first step, which now appears underway, calls for Pakistan to end cross-border shelling of Afghan villages and to free Taliban detainees. Nine were released last month after Rabbani’s visit, and Pakistan has agreed to free more.

In the first half of 2013, Afghan, U.S. and Pakistani officials are to agree on terms for removing Taliban leaders “willing to engage in peace talks” from a U.N. terrorism list and giving them safe passage. Pakistan would “facilitate direct contact” between Afghan officials “and identified leaders of the Taliban and other armed opposition groups.”

Afghan, Pakistani and U.S. officials would “explore and agree to terms for initiating direct peace talks” between the sides “with a focus on Saudi Arabia as the venue.”

The negotiations would begin in the second half of 2013 “preferably through one consistent and coherent channel, with the aim of securing agreements on priority issues, such as ending violence, allowing space for the provision of basic public services, e.g. education, humanitarian aid, and security in the conduct of the upcoming elections,” the plan says.

The sides would agree to a ceasefire and terms for the release of Taliban prisoners by the government “in return for their agreement to disengage and renounce violence.”

The sides also would “reach an understanding on issues related to security and the withdrawal of international forces,” and agree on rules for the insurgents’ participation in 2014 provincial council and 2015 parliamentary elections.

Another provision would confer considerable political power on the insurgents by allowing them to become cabinet members, provincial governors, district administrators, police chiefs and other key officials.

“The negotiating parties to agree on modalities for the inclusion of Taliban and other armed opposition leaders in the power structure of the state, to include non-elected positions at different levels with due consideration of legal and governance principles,” the plan says.

That provision, combined with one for an agreement “creating immediate space for education and humanitarian and development aid and public services,” could effectively cede political control of the Taliban’s southern and eastern heartland to the insurgents.

The agreements would be implemented in the first half of 2014, and the final phase, set for the second half of 2014, would be used to build international cooperation on preserving the long-term stability of Afghanistan and the region, the plan says.

Correction: Paragraph 10 of this version has been revised to provide the correct date for the assassination of former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Sgt. Matthew H. Stiltz
Capt. James D. Nehl
Kenneth W. Bennett

PAYING TRIBUTE TO ALABAMA STATE REPRESENTATIVE DR. YVONNE KENNEDY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to the life and legacy of an Alabama State representative, Dr. Yvonne Kennedy, a lawmaker from Mobile, Alabama, who passed away, sadly, on Saturday at the age of 67.

Dr. Kennedy was a pillar in the community and a tremendous public servant. She was the epitome of a servant leader, and she blazed the trails in Alabama politics that so many of us now follow. She led by example and was motivated by a drive and a passion for public service and education.

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I am deeply saddened by her passing and know that her legacy of service will live on.

Yvonne Kennedy was born on January 8, 1945, in Mobile, Alabama, to Leroy and Thelma Kennedy. At a young age, she displayed a commitment to academic excellence, and upon graduating from high school, she earned her bachelor’s degree from Alabama State University, a master’s degree from Morgan State University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Alabama. These early accomplishments were the beginning of an illustrious career both as a lawmaker and a community leader.

First elected to the Alabama State House of Representatives in a special election in 1979, Dr. Kennedy was one of the longest-serving members of the Alabama State legislature. She served the 97th District of Mobile for more than 33 years. She was a prominent lawmaker who fought against Alabama’s egregious voter ID laws, and she also championed the restoration of voter rights for rehabilitated ex-felons. She was the former chair of Alabama’s legislative black caucus and was well respected by her colleagues. Her tireless commitment to public service and her advocacy for quality education in Alabama was unparalleled.

In 1981, Dr. Kennedy became the president of Bishop State Community College in Mobile, Alabama, and she served in that role for over 25 years. Under her leadership, Bishop State expanded from one campus to three campuses, and flourished until her departure in 2007. Dr. Kennedy was a premier educator whose commitment to education knew no bounds.

Dr. Kennedy was a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, and was their 19th national President from 1988 to 1992. She served on the boards of the Association of Higher Education, America’s Junior Miss, was

a trustee for Miles College, and she was a longstanding member of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. She was chairwoman of the Mobile County United Negro College Fund and youth director of the Board of Christian Education-Southeast Alabama Conference.

I know that my generation owes Dr. Kennedy a debt of gratitude. I know that my generation stands on the shoulders of trailblazers like Dr. Yvonne Kennedy. It was her light that guided the path that led me to become Alabama’s first African American Congresswoman, and for that I am eternally grateful.

She left an indelible imprint on Alabama and across this Nation, and her legacy will live on. It is indeed a great privilege and an honor that I have today to recognize the legacy and contributions of Dr. Yvonne Kennedy with this tribute on the floor of the House of Representatives. Let her life stand as a testament to the courage and strength of one individual’s ability to shape the lives of so many. On behalf of the Seventh Congressional District and the State of Alabama and a grateful Nation, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Yvonne Kennedy.

THE FISCAL CLIFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, to understand the Federal budget mess and the so-called fiscal cliff, it’s important to know three numbers: 39, 37, and 64.

Thirty-nine percent is the combined growth of inflation and population over the last 10 years. Thirty-seven percent is the increase in revenues in the same period. That’s despite the recession and the tax cuts. It’s not quite keeping pace, but it’s pretty close. Sixty-four percent is the number that is killing us. Sixty-four percent is the increase in Federal spending in that period. That’s nearly twice the rate of inflation and population growth over the last 10 years.

The spending side of the fiscal cliff is the so-called “sequester,” automatic cuts in Federal spending. To hear some tell it, it is the end of Western civilization as we know it. That’s hardly the case. After a 64 percent increase in expenditures during this decade, the sequester doesn’t actually cut spending at all. It simply limits spending growth next year to about a half of a percent. I opposed the budget deal that created the sequester last year because it fell woefully short of what Standard & Poor’s clearly warned was necessary to preserve the Nation’s AAA credit rating. Sadly, that fear was borne out, but now the sequester is all we have.

It’s true defense takes the brunt of it, but does our defense spending really need to be higher—inflation adjusted—

LIST OF NAMES TO SUBMIT FOR THE RECORD

Sgt. 1st Class Darren M. Linde
Spc. Tyler J. Orgaard
Lance Cpl. Anthony J. Denier
Cpl. Christopher M. Monahan, Jr.
Petty Officer 1st Class Kevin R. Ebbert
Lance Cpl. Dale W. Means
Sgt. Channing B. Hicks
Spc. Joseph A. Richardson
Staff Sgt. Rayvon Battle, Jr.